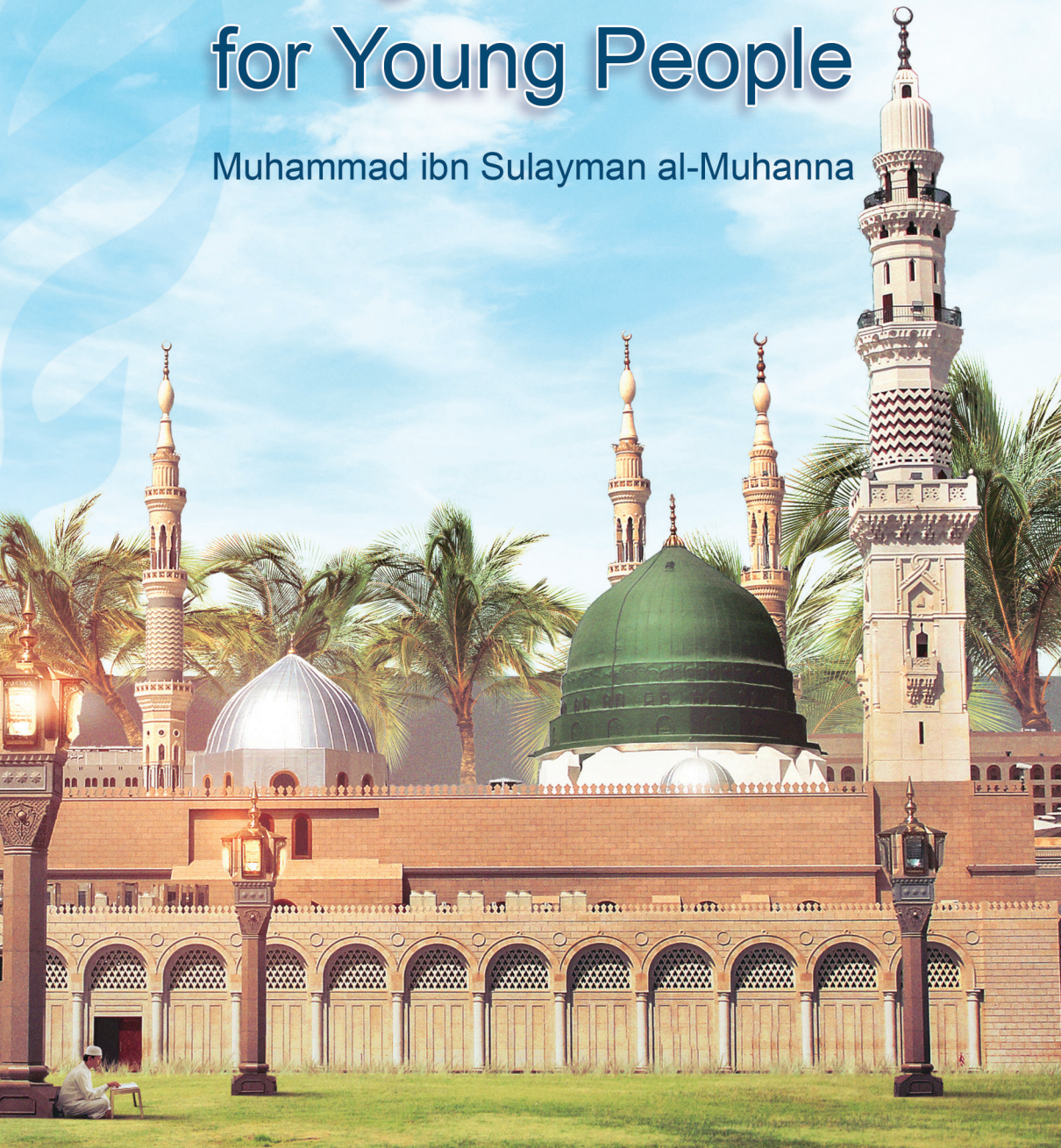
Forty Hadiths

for Young People

Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Muhanna



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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Introduction

All praise belongs to God, the Lord of all worlds. Peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, his household and all companions.

Scholars have published a large number of books which comprise of forty hadiths. The best known of these is *Al-Arba'ūn al-Nawawiyyah*, compiled by Imam al-Nawawī. He intended these to be studied and memorized by students of Islamic studies. Other books listing forty hadiths include *Al-Arba'ūn fī Dalā'il al-Tawḥīd*, by Imam al-Harawī. These hadiths concentrate on God's oneness. Ibn al-Mufaḍḍal compiled *Al-Arba'ūn al-Ilāhiyyah*, while Ibn 'Asākir's collection was *Al-Arba'ūn al-Buldāniyyah*. There are many other selections of forty hadiths.

God has given me the honour of selecting forty short hadiths tackling various religious subjects to present to young Muslims so that they can memorize and learn their meanings. I call my collection *Al-Arba'ūn al-Wildāniyyah* as the hadiths are primarily catered to Muslim children. Every one of these forty hadiths is highly authentic, as they are narrated by one or both of the top two scholars of hadith sciences: Al-Bukhari and Muslim. May God bestow mercy on their souls.

I include a general explanation of each of these forty hadiths, stating its message. I made an effort to keep the explanation short, clear, and easy to read.

I humbly hope that God, Mighty and Exalted, may accept my work and that my effort will be well received by people, so that these hadiths will be widely learned and memorized by individuals and groups of students, and that they will provide material for competitions and courses in mosques, schools, and private homes.

Our Lord, we ask You to accept our humble efforts, and accept the repentance of our sins, for You are the Ever-Merciful who accepts repentance. Forgive us and forgive our parents and loved ones as well as all Muslims our sins. Bestow peace and blessings on Prophet Muhammad and his household and all his companions.

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A Prelude of Six Points

1. This book is suitable for the young, but it is also good for adults. It only includes verses of the Qur'an, statements by the Prophet (peace be upon him), or advice based on what eminent scholars have written.

2. I have chosen short hadiths so that they can be easily memorized. They address a variety of subjects so that they will give great benefit.

3. I provide an index listing the texts of the hadiths, or their beginnings, to help with memorization and revision.

4. My primary purpose in compiling this selection is to make it easy for young Muslims to memorize. Therefore, I suggest that programs and competitions should be organized in homes, schools and other places for such memorization.

(5) I urge parents and teachers to first read this book with their sons and daughters or with their students to learn the correct pronunciation of each hadith. They should also teach them the Islamic manners highlighted by the hadiths.

(6) I highlight numerous beneficial points and directives in my explanation of the hadiths. However, the messages of these hadiths go far beyond what I have mentioned. Therefore, I hope that young readers will endeavour to discover these and record them, either through individual or joint efforts, so that they will learn more and impart knowledge to others.

1

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“Islam is built on five: the declaration that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God’s Messenger, regular attendance to prayer, payment of zakat, the pilgrimage and fasting during Ramadan.”** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

In this hadith, the Prophet explains five matters that are the most critical and essential aspects of the Islamic faith. Therefore, they are called the Five Pillars of Islam.

The first pillar is the declaration of faith that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad was God’s Messenger. This pillar is the most important of the five pillars. Whoever states this declaration verbally and believes in it is considered a believer in Islam.

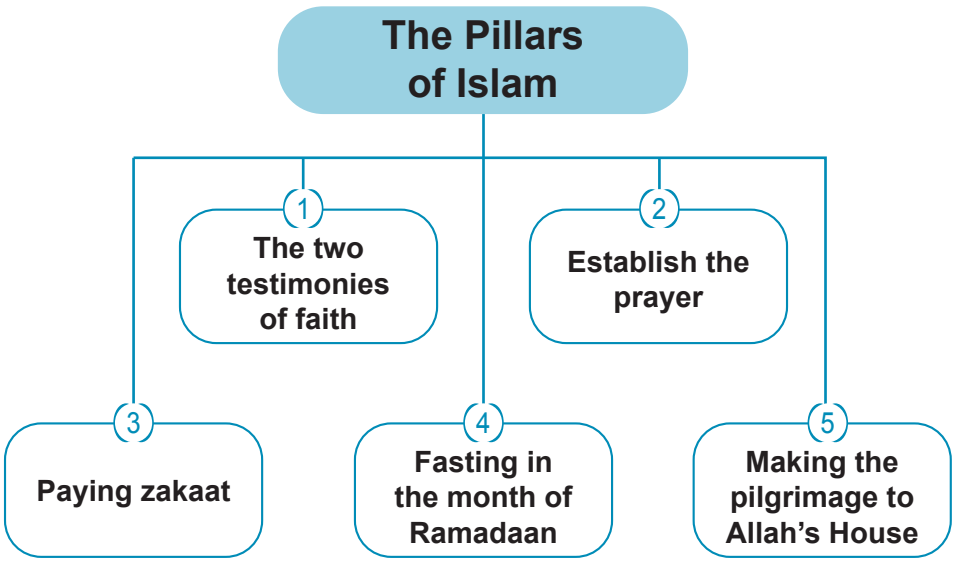
The second pillar is the regular adherence to prayer. This comes next to the declaration in terms of importance. Hence, the Prophet mentions prayer immediately after the declaration.

The third pillar is the payment of zakat, which is a sum of money determined by Islamic law from a person's wealth. A Muslim must pay zakat to the poor and needy and others who qualify as beneficiaries of this fund.

The fourth essential is fasting during the month of Ramadan. A Muslim must fast every day of the month of Ramadan unless he has an exemption.

The fifth essential is the pilgrimage to God's Sacred House in Makkah. This duty applies once only in a Muslim's lifetime, provided that they meet the condition of ability to travel and perform the hajj.

These are the five pillars on which the structure of the Islamic faith is built. The detailed rulings and recommendations applicable to each of them are explained in books of Islamic law.



Anas ibn Mālik said: **"God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was asked about grave sins. He said: 'Associating partners with God, undutifulness to parents, murder, and perjury"'**. [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

In this hadith, the Prophet tells us that four actions are ranked among the gravest sins people commit. The first of these is associating partners with God. This offense takes a person away from Islam and lands him in the realm of disbelief. Moreover, ascribing partners to God condemns a person to everlasting punishment in Hell, as God says: "The disbelievers are indeed those who say: 'God is the Christ, son of Mary'. The Christ himself said: 'Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord'. Whoever associates partners with God, God shall forbid him entrance into Paradise, and his abode will be the Fire. Wrongdoers will have no helpers." (5:72)

The second grave sin mentioned in the hadith is undutifulness to parents. This includes abandoning and boycotting them, offending them by word or deed, disobeying them and, also causing them distress or grief, etc.

A third major sin the hadith mentions is murder. To kill someone without acceptable justification is indeed a very grave offense. It incurs God's wrath and condemns the murderer to suffer punishment in Hell, as God says in the Qur'an: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93)

The fourth sin stated in the hadith is perjury which is to give false testimony. Whoever deliberately gives a testimony against another person, knowing that it is false, commits an enormity that ranks among the gravest of sins.

Every Muslim must be truthful at all times and in all situations. This includes giving true testimony. If a Muslim is required to be a witness, whether in court or other situations, they must state the truth. A Muslim must not state a falsehood so that he remains free of committing such a grave sin.

3

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe.”**

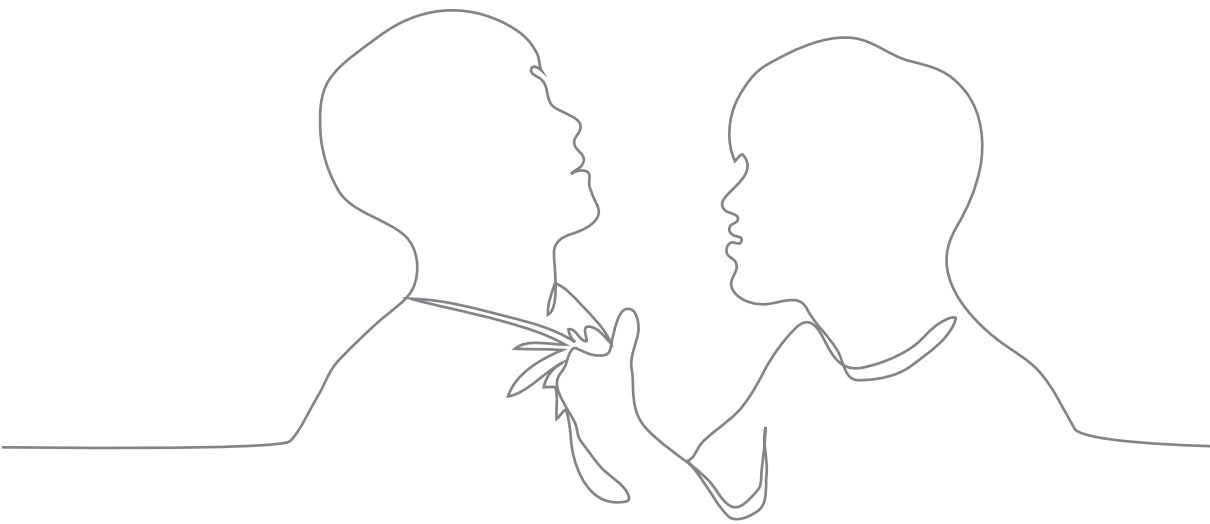
[Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

A Muslim may be firm or weak in his adherence to Islam, just as a believer may be of firm or weak in faith. Therefore, the one who is perfectly firm in adhering to Islam and its values and principles is a true Muslim. It is this type of adherence to faith that God loves and accepts.

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that a true Muslim is in complete control of his tongue and hand. Thus, he does not offend other Muslims, whether by word or deed. He does not revile or backbite others, so as to offend them. Nor does he assault them physically.

Such is the description of a perfect adherent to Islam: he causes no harm or offense to others by word or deed. Therefore, the one who offends Muslims verbally or harms them physically is deficient in faith and does not earn God's pleasure.



4

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"The mark of a hypocrite consists of three characteristics: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; and when he is placed in trust, he betrays."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

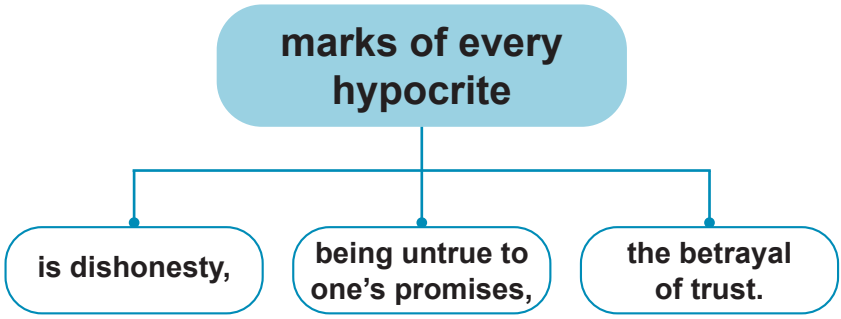
Hypocrites are among the most abominable of people. God tells us about their abode in the life to come: "The hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire, and you will find none who can give them support." (4:145)

In this hadith, the Prophet mentions three characteristics describing them as marks of every hypocrite so that we are well aware of them and make sure to always remain free of them.

The first characteristic is dishonesty, the second is being untrue to one's promises, and the third is the betrayal of trust. These three are the main characteristics of every hypocrite.

By contrast, when a believer speaks, he speaks the truth and steers away from falsehood. When he promises something, he honours his promise, fulfilling it. When someone places something with him in trust, he gives it back to him on demand, without hesitation or delay.

Likewise, if someone tells him something or trusts him with a secret, requesting him to keep that information to himself, a believer will not divulge that information to anyone as giving a secret away is a type of betrayal of trust. Therefore, we ask to God to keep us safe from such betrayal.



5

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“What separates a person from disbelief and associating partners with God is the negligence of prayer.”** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

Prayer is the second most important essential of the Islamic faith. It is ranked immediately after the declaration testifying one’s belief that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God’s Messenger. Therefore, God has commanded us to attend regularly to prayer. Numerous verses of the Qur’an and hadiths by the Prophet clearly state this requirement and forbid neglecting it.

This hadith clarifies that taking a complacent attitude towards prayer involves significant risk. The Prophet clarifies that negligence of prayer is the one thing that brings a person into disbelief. If one abandons prayer, neglecting one’s duty of offering the five daily obligatory prayers, one gets close to disbelief and associating partners with God. Therefore, we seek God’s protection from being in such a situation.

The hadith serves as clear evidence that the negligence of prayer is one of the gravest of sins. It is indeed more sinful than some of the grave sins like usury, adultery, theft and drinking alcohol. All of these are very serious sins indeed.

Therefore, every Muslim man and woman must make sure to attend to their prayers on time, giving prayer its due importance. We must not forget that such attendance to prayer brings us goodness, blessings, and an increase of provisions. Besides, prayer is a means to receive God's forgiveness of our sins, earn His pleasure, and gain admittance into Heaven.

It is essential for every Muslim, man or woman, to know the prayer times and make an effort to perform every prayer on time. The timing of every prayer is serious because a person who delays a prayer, for no valid reason, letting its time pass without offering it, commits a grave sin.

6

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"A strong believer is better and dearer to God than a weak believer, but there is goodness in both."** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

In this short statement, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urges us to be strong in all our affairs: in our belief in God, our firm certainty of Him, following His teachings, commitment to His religion, the pursuit of knowledge, acquisition of strength as well as in all what benefits us in matters of life and faith. It is sufficient motivation for us to seek such strength that a strong believer is better and dearer to God than a weak believer. A strong believer is "strong in faith, will, resolve and action."(1)

Therefore, all believers, men and women, must endeavour to strengthen their faith as best as they can. They should use all facilities that lead to the strengthening of faith. They should also exert serious efforts to strengthen their resolve to do good deeds that

(1) M. S. ibn Uthaymin, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm*, Surahs 49-57.

bring them closer to God and acquire the strength of character to deal with life's many adversities. Moreover, they should strengthen themselves through useful learning and experience. They will thus be able to benefit themselves and their community.

However, it is crucial to understand the Prophet's assurance that both strong and weak believers have goodness. Indeed, to be a believer ensures goodness in every person, but the strong one has a higher position which makes them better and dearer to God, the Exalted.

7

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“Whoever performs the ablution for prayer and he performs it well, then walks to [join] the obligatory prayer and he offers it with the congregation shall be forgiven his sins by God.”** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

In this hadith, the Prophet tells us of a splendid action that God rewards generously. This reward is the forgiveness of sins. The action is related to prayer, and it consists of three matters which a Muslim does in obedience to God and to draw closer to Him:

1. Performing the ablution, or wudu, well. This means that the ablution is done perfectly, making sure that every part of one’s body involved in the ablution is washed well.
2. To walk to the mosque intending to offer the obligatory prayer due.
3. To offer this obligatory prayer with the Muslim congregation.

When a person fulfills this, doing his ablution well and thoroughly, then walks to the mosque and offers his prayer with the congregation, he is sure to earn this generous reward, namely, the forgiveness of his sins. Those who are forgiven their sins are those who attain success both in this present life and in the life to come.

8

Abu Hurayrah said that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Whoever intentionally attributes to me a statement I did not say shall take his seat in the Fire."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

Telling a lie in a statement attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is one of the gravest sins. Therefore, a person who composes a statement and claims that it was said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) commits a monstrous sin. Moreover, a person who quotes a fabricated hadith without explaining that it is fabricated perpetrates an injustice. Such a deed is truly foul.

Regrettably, some false hadiths are widely circulated. It is even more unfortunate that some good and well-intentioned people help to circulate such false hadiths. This is a grave error that we must counsel one another against committing. To lie to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the worst type of lying.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"A false attribution to me is unlike falsely attributing something to anyone else. Whoever intentionally attributes to me a statement I did not say**

shall take his seat in the Fire." [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim]. He also said: **"Whoever attributes a hadith to me, knowing that it is false is one of the liars."** [Related by al-Tirmidhī and he graded it as authentic].

Therefore, it is our duty to make sure that any hadith we quote is authentic before we attribute it to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is an aspect of God's grace that it is easy for us in the present time to verify the authenticity of hadiths through reference to specialized books and reliable websites. Among the best-known and reliable books in this area are the hadith anthologies published by Shaykh Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, may God bestow mercy on his soul.

On the internet, reference may be made to the following websites:

تذكر هنا أسماء المواقع وعناوينها بالانكليزية.

9

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ūd reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“A person with an atom weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Heaven.”** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

Islam promotes good manners and moral values. As such, it urges its followers to be kind and show humility when they deal with people. It forbids arrogance and conceit.

In this hadith, the Prophet warns arrogant people who look at others with contempt, treating them with disdain. As the Prophet states, such conceited people shall not be admitted into Heaven. Therefore, we pray to God to remain free of such behaviour.

As the Prophet says: **“A person with an atom weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Heaven,”** he stresses that arrogance is a very grave matter, even though it may be very little. The Prophet stresses this by speaking about an infinitesimal measure of arrogance: an atom’s weight.

The Prophet defines arrogance, stating that **"arrogance is to be scornful of the truth and contemptuous of people."** [Related by Muslim].

Another pointer to the prohibition of arrogance is the hadith that quotes the Prophet: **"He who gives himself airs or walks with an arrogant gait will find out when he meets God, the Mighty and Exalted, that He is displeased with him."** [Related by al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad,* with a sound chain of transmission].

Now that we realize that arrogance is a grave sin and foul behaviour, we must ensure that we steer away from it. We should do every good thing contrary to arrogance, such as welcoming good advice and submitting to the truth. We should be kind to the poor, weak, and lowly in society. We should take care of them and behave with humility towards all people. Such behaviour keeps our hearts pure and ensures that we are free of arrogance and conceit.

10

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“The best of you are those who learn the Qur’an and teach it.”** [Related by al-Bukhari].

Explanation

This hadith highlights the importance of learning and teaching the Qur’an. The Prophet tells us that those people who learn the Qur’an and teach it are the best of people.

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, who narrated this hadith from ‘Uthmān, belonged to the *tābi’īn* generation, which followed the generation of the Prophet’s companions. He said: **“This is what committed me to this position.”** He was referring to the fact that he taught the Qur’an for several decades. His desire was to be included among those ‘best of people’ to which the hadith refers.

Therefore, it is the duty of every Muslim, male or female, to make a solid effort to learn the Qur’an and ensure that they can recite it accurately. When one has mastered that, one may take part in teaching it to others.

One of the most valuable things a person can do is join one of the circles of Qur'anic memorization in a mosque or a school. These provide the best service in teaching the Qur'an. Those who join one of them are doing well and are clearly guided. Their way is well enlightened.

11

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Two phrases are easy to pronounce, heavy in [God's] scales, and loved by the Lord of Grace: 'Limitless is God in His glory and to Him all praise is due, and Limitless in His glory is God the Supreme.'"** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges us to remember God much and often, explaining the importance of such remembrance and repetition of phrases of God's glorification. He recommends us to say certain texts of remembrance and glorification in the morning, evening, when going to bed and when we wake up. All these are documented in numerous books devoted to this subject, such as *al-Adhkār* by Imam al-Nawawī, *Tuḥfat al-Akhyār* by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz and *Ḥiṣn al-Muslim* by al-Qaḥṭānī.

Other phrases of God's remembrance are recommended to say at all times, frequently, without specifying a time or a number. These include *Subḥān Allah* (limitless is God in His glory), *al-ḥamd lillāh* (All praise is due to God), *lā ilāha illa Allah* (There is no deity other than God), *Allah akbar* (God is the Greatest), and *lā ḥawla walā quwwata illa billāh* (no effort or power exists except by God's will).

The two phrases mentioned in this hadith are also in this category. These are *Subḥān Allah wa biḥamdih* (Limitless is God in His glory and to Him all praise is due) and *Subḥān Allah al-aẓīm* (God the Supreme is Limitless in His glory). The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that these phrases have three unique features. They are:

1. Easy to pronounce, very easy to learn, and are repeated often.
2. Heavy in [God's] scales, which means that they are richly rewarded by God so that the one who repeats them frequently enriches his balance of good deeds; and
3. Loved by the Lord of Grace. This means that God, Blessed and Exalted, loves them, which stresses their importance.

Therefore, we should be make sure to learn these two phrases and those similar to them and say them often and frequently to earn God's rich reward.

12

Abu Hurayrah said: **"My friend (peace be upon him) urged me to maintain three things: fasting three days in every month, praying two rak'ahs in the mid-morning and praying Witr before I go to bed."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

Abu Hurayrah was a distinguished companion of the Prophet and was closely associated with him. He tells us in this hadith of the Prophet's strong recommendation, describing the Prophet as *khalīī*, which means 'my close friend'. It signifies a bond of strong love between two persons. In this hadith, Abu Hurayrah mentions three matters the Prophet recommended him to do regularly.

The first recommendation is to fast three days every month. This is a highly beneficial practice recommended by the Prophet who tells us that a person who ensures to fast three days in every month earns the reward of fasting throughout one's life. This is an aspect of God's rich reward which He bestows on His devoted servants.

This fasting is voluntary, done to earn God's pleasure. It is equally good to fast three consecutive days or three separate days.

The second recommendation is that of voluntary prayer in mid-morning. This consists of two *rak'ahs* or more during the morning. It is recommended that one prays two or four *rak'ahs*, or even more at this time. Such voluntary prayer earns God's rich reward.

The third recommendation concerns the Witr prayer, the most important voluntary prayers. Its time range extends from finishing the obligatory prayer of 'Ishā until the Fajr prayer becomes due. This voluntary prayer consists of a single *rak'ah*, or three, or five or more *rak'ahs*, but they must be in an odd number, which is the meaning of the word *witr*.

The Prophet gave this recommendation to Abu Hurayrah, but it is also a recommendation for all of us given by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

13

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"The closest a servant of God draws to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Say more supplication then."** [Related by Muslim].

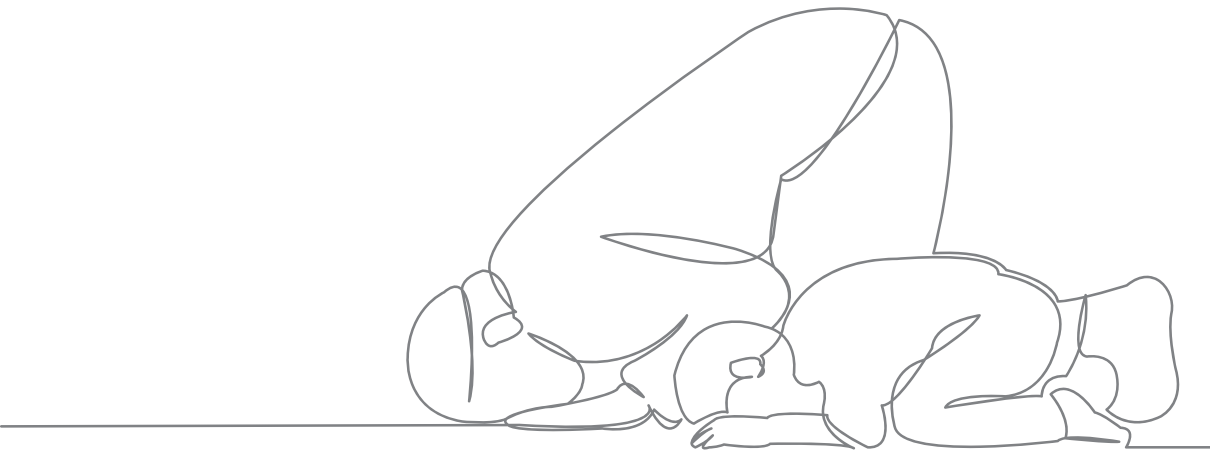
Explanation

God requires His servants to draw closer to Him by doing more of the various acts that earn His acceptance and pleasure. One of the most important acts is prayer, whether obligatory or voluntary. When a Muslim starts a prayer, he draws close to God.

Although every part of Islamic prayer draws a believer close to God, he is closest to his Lord when he prostrates himself before Him. God's servant submits to God when he prostrates himself and glorifies God. If he supplicates in this position, he demonstrates his need for his Lord and dependence on Him.

Therefore, the position of prostration is one in which supplications are answered. In a different hadith, the Prophet says: **"When you are in prostration, increase your supplication, as it is more likely that your supplication is answered."**

This clarifies that it is preferable to make one's prostration long and increase one's supplication during prostration. Together, these two provide a situation that ensures the bestowing of goodness and success in this life and in the life to come.



14

Thābit ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Cursing a believer is like killing him."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

Cursing is a severe act of disobedience of God, and as such, it is a grave sin. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned against cursing in several hadiths, including the present one in which he describes the cursing of a believer as killing him. In a different hadith, the Prophet said: **"Do not hurl God's curse or wrath against one another."** [Related by Abu Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī who has graded it as authentic].

In a different hadith, also related by Abu Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī with a sound chain of transmission, the Prophet says: **"When someone undeservedly curses something, the curse will rebound on him."** This means that if a person curses without appropriate justification, the curse will rebound back on the person who has said it.

Al-Ṭabarānī related a hadith quoting Salamah ibn al-Akwa', a companion of the Prophet: 'When we saw a man cursing his brother, we felt that he has committed a grave sin'. Likewise, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz said: "To curse a Muslim is to commit a grave sin."[1]

Unfortunately, cursing has become a common practice among many Muslims. It is our binding duty to disapprove of it, never resort to it, and warn others against it.

(1) A. Ibn Bāz, *Majmū' Fatāwā wa Maqālāt*, Vol. 7, p. 148.

15

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"God, Blessed and Exalted be He, says: Son of Adam, spend and I will give you more."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

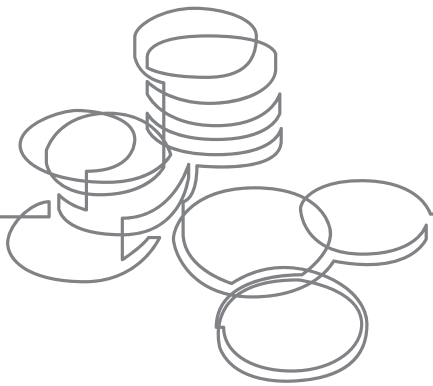
Explanation

One of the best qualities by which God has praised His believing servants is that they spend generously supporting God's cause. God says in the Qur'an: 'This is the Book, there is no doubt about it: a guidance for the God-fearing. Those who believe in what lies beyond the reach of human perception, regularly attend to prayer and give generously of what We bestow upon them'. (2:2-3)

Spending is a general word that covers one's spending on one's wife and children, giving the poor and needy, and donating for good causes such as distributing copies of the Qur'an and beneficial books, treating sick people in need, and other charitable ways.

This hadith states a promise by God, the Exalted, that He will give more to any person who spends money for good causes. God will certainly give him generously, as He says in the Qur'an: 'Say: 'My Lord gives in abundance, or gives in scant measure, to whomever He wills of His servants; whatever you give for His sake He will replace it for you, for He is the best of providers'. (34: 39)

When a person spends to look after his family, or his parents, or relatives, and when he gives to the poor and the needy or supports good causes, God will surely reward him and provide him with plenty, compensating him for what he has spent. "Such is God's favour: He grants it to whom He will. God is One who bestows great favours." (62:4)



16

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Whatever a believer suffers from a chronic illness, weakness, malady, grief, worry, and even a thorn that pricks him will shed some of his sins."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

In this present life, everyone suffers some problems, worries, griefs and illness. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us something extremely important which we should always remember. It is very satisfying, and it comforts our souls and gives us needed reassurance.

The Prophet tells us that whenever we suffer from illness or weakness or worry, or grief, it will be a cause that ensures that God relieves us from some of our sins. Thus, such troubles become the means of enlightening our burden and relieving us from some of our sins. Thus, when a believer's problem has gone, he is relieved of it and relieved of his past sins. He thus draws closer to God, His Lord.

The Prophet includes in this **‘even a thorn that pricks him’**. This makes clear that every adversity, however light, will erase some of his sins. Therefore, every Muslim should be delighted with this great favour God bestows on him. To earn such favour a Muslim must train himself to remain patient when he goes through some trouble, accepting it with resignation and remaining grateful to God. A person who is content with whatever God gives him will surely earn God’s pleasure. This will bring him further favours from God, whose bounty is great indeed.

17

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"You shall not be admitted into Heaven unless you [truly] believe, and you will not believe unless you love one another. Shall I point out to you something which, if you do it, will generate love between you? Spread the greeting of peace widely among you."** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

This hadith urges us towards a very vital matter, namely, to love one another. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that we shall not be admitted into Heaven unless we believe, and that we shall not be true believers unless we love one another.

To ensure that we love one another, we have to do something very easy that ensures love is spread among us. This easy thing is to spread the greeting of peace widely between us. Thus, the hadith teaches us that extending the greeting of peace enables love to spread among us, and when love is so widespread, it increases and strengthens our faith. Such strong faith is a cause that ensures admittance into Heaven.

The best formula of greeting is to say: *assalām ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh wa barakātuh*. The best return of this greeting is to say: *wa ‘alaykum assalām wa raḥmatullāh wa barakātuh*. If a person only says *assalām ‘alaykum* or *assalām ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh*, this is sufficient, but the full version is better.

Therefore, a Muslim must be keen to say the greeting of peace, i.e. *salām*, to other people. He should not neglect to do so or feel shy to say it. He should never forget that it is a reason to earn God’s reward and strengthen one’s faith. It also leads to admittance into Heaven.

18

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Let no man look at the private parts [i.e. the *'awrah*] of another man; nor a woman at the private parts of another woman."**

[Related by Muslim].

Explanation

This hadith tells us of a very important matter which we should learn and put into action. Every human being, man or woman, has an *'awrah*, which means an area of the body that must not be exposed before anyone: the area of one's private parts. A Muslim must cover his or her *'awrah*, and everyone should make sure not to look at anyone else's *'awrah*. The hadith speaks about the behaviour of one man towards another man or one woman towards another woman. Needless to say, the restriction applies to a greater degree between men and women.

Having learned this, we realize that it is our incumbent duty to cover our *'awrah* so that it is not exposed before anyone. We must not be complacent on this point, leaving our *'awrah* exposed to sight or touch. We should also be aware that this is something in which neither trifling nor complacency is permissible in any way.

19

Al-Ṣa'b ibn Jaththāmah al-Laythī reports that **"he gave a zebra [he had hunted] as a gift to the Prophet when he was at al-Abwāʾ (or at Waddān), but the Prophet returned it." He added: "When God's Messenger (peace be upon him) saw the expression on my face, he said: 'We have returned it to you only because we are in the state of consecration.'"** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet's companions loved to give some gifts to the Prophet, and the Prophet usually accepted their gifts and rewarded them. As the Prophet was on his journey to perform the pilgrimage, a man called al-Ṣa'b ibn Jaththāmah brought him a gift which was some hunted animal. He hoped that it would provide a good meal for the Prophet. However, the Prophet did not accept this gift because he was in the state of consecration, i.e. *iḥrām*, during which no hunting is allowed.

The man was sorry when the Prophet returned his gift, and this was visible in his face. Therefore, the Prophet immediately explained the reason for returning this particular gift, saying: **"We have returned it to you only because we are in consecration."** Thus the man realized that there was nothing personal in the matter. He was pleased, and he reported the case to his friends and associates.

The Prophet's action highlights the importance of giving explanations and excuses to not allow Satan to cause ill-feeling between us. God says in the Qur'an: "Tell My servants that they should always say that which is best. Satan tries to sow discord between them. Satan is indeed man's clear enemy." (17: 53)

Imam al-Nawawī enters this hadith under the heading of 'good manners' in his anthology known as *Riyādh al-Ṣāliḥīn*, showing that giving the right and proper explanation is part of good manners.

20

Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"A person who tells tales of calumny will not enter Heaven."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

This is one of the hadiths that warn us against offensive speech. It takes various forms, including backbiting and telling calumnious tales.

Imam al-Nawawī said: "These two actions, backbiting and spreading tales of calumny, are most repugnant, yet they are very common. Only a few people are safe from both."(1)

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) warns us against a particularly abominable practice that is considered a grave sin. It is known as *namīmah*, which means telling tales of calumny. The Prophet says that a person who habitually does this will not be admitted into Heaven. This is because circulating such calumnious rumours aims to create friction between people, which may lead to disputes and hatred, replacing healthy social relations.

(1) Imam al-Nawawī, *Al-Adhkār*, p. 336.

Therefore, it is imperative that every Muslim, man or woman, refrain from circulating tales of calumny because such action may lead to suffering torment in the grave and ultimately deprive a person of the chance of admittance into Heaven.

21

Anas ibn Mālik reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"If any Muslim plants a tree or some other plant and any bird, human or animal eats of it, it will be credited to him as charity."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

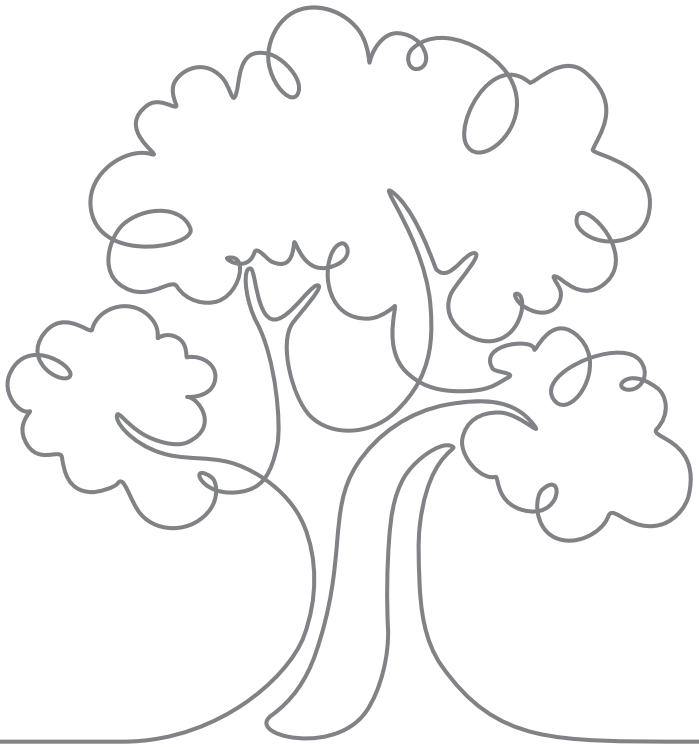
Explanation

Agriculture is an essential human activity, as it is a means for the availability of food and it is a source of income and enrichment.

One of God's favours which He bestows on His servants, is that when a Muslim plants something and provides food for a human being, bird, or some other animal, God credits the person who planted it with the reward of giving charity. This is despite the fact that that person did not intend to grow it to give charity but to provide food for his family or sell its produce.

Indeed this favour granted by God is not limited to plants. It applies to every good deed a Muslim does, which also benefits other people. Thus, when any person or a bird or animal drinks

from a well, the one who dug the well earns a reward for their drink. If someone constructs a shelter and it is used by another person, or by an animal or a bird, the constructor of that shelter is given a reward. Indeed, this applies further to any type of good deed that benefits others.



22

Abu Hurayrah reports: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) owed someone something and that person was harsh in demanding it. The Prophet's companions were up against him, but the Prophet said to them: **"The one with a rightful claim is entitled to speak."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet bought a camel and agreed with the owner to give him the price after an agreed period. When the time was due, the man came to the Prophet to get what was due to him. He came in and was impolite in making his demand. The Prophet's companions who were present felt angry with the man and wanted to punish him for his bad manners. They would not tolerate that anyone could speak impolitely to the Prophet. However, the Prophet stopped them and ordered them to leave the man alone. He said that a rightful claim empowers a person to speak up since he only demands what is due to him.

The hadith gives us an important lesson regarding dealing with people. It tells us that when a person is merely demanding what is rightfully due to him, we must listen to him, giving him due attention. We must not rebuke him for raising his voice or showing some anger.

When we observe what the Prophet teaches us of good manners, we ensure that people get what is rightfully theirs. This leads to fewer disputes and quarrels in society.

23

Abu Qatādah said: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: **"Whoever is pleased that God saves him from the distress of the Day of Judgement, should give respite to the one in straitened circumstances, or reduce his debt."**

[Related by Muslim].

Explanation

God will hold all people to account on the Day of Judgement, and He will recompense them according to their deeds, whether good or evil. He will judge between them on all the issues they differed in this present life. He will then order their admission into Heaven or their punishment in Hell.

The Day of Judgement will be very difficult for people as they will be in great distress. Therefore, a person who wishes that God spares them such misery on that day should help those in straightened circumstances, unable to repay their debts or forego what they owe.

Reducing the burden of insolvent debtors or writing off their debts are very good deeds, but they are recommended, not obligatory. Reducing their burden may be by giving them more time to settle their debts, while foregoing the debt may be partial or total.

Therefore, if you have lent someone some money and agreed a time for repayment, but then you learn that your debtor is in difficulty, you will do well to give him time, reduce his burden, or even forego your claim completely. Your action will be credited to you by God as an outstanding deed done for His sake. You will hope that this will spare you distress on the Day of Judgement and ultimate admittance into Heaven.

24

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Whoever cheats us does not belong to us."** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

Once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was walking along in the marketplace in Madinah when he passed by someone who had placed a heap of food he wanted to sell, and because it had rained sometime earlier, the food the man was selling was affected by rain. So the man arranged his merchandise such that the wet portion of his food was at the bottom, covered by the dry part.

The Prophet realized that there was something wrong with the heap of food, and he put his hand deep into it. He felt the wetness and remonstrated with the seller. He said to him: **"Should you not have placed the wet portion on top so that people would see it? Whoever cheats us does not belong to us."**

This means that a seller should be honest and deal clearly. He should not exaggerate the merit of his goods. He must not hide any defect in his goods. Moreover, he should not seek an unreasonable price for he sells.

The hadith makes clear that cheating is unacceptable and terrible conduct. It is not permissible for a Muslim to resort to it, whether he is trading or doing his job as an employee or a student. Indeed, whatever form they may take, all types of cheating are forbidden in Islam.

25

Abu Umāmah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Whoever wrests by an oath something that rightfully belongs to a Muslim person, God will decree the Fire for him and forbid him heaven." A man asked: "Even if it is little, Messenger of God?" The Prophet said: "Even if it is a stick of a wood tree."** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

Islamic law, the shariah, takes special care of people's rights. It makes clear that no one may take what rightfully belongs to someone else, be it money or anything else.

In this hadith, the Prophet warns against taking away something that belongs to another person. He further informs us that if such appropriation of someone else's right is achieved by the offender swearing a false oath, his requital is to take his abode in Hell and to be forbidden entry into Heaven.

When the Prophet's companions heard what he said, they asked: 'Even if it is little, Messenger of God?' They wanted to know whether this very stern punishment applied to someone who takes a small thing that belongs to another person. The Prophet said: **"Even if it is a stick of a wood tree."** This means that taking other people's property is a grave sin, even if it is as little as a small stick of wood. The Prophet named the wood tree *arāk*, from which a small stick that is used as a toothbrush.

26

Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent him with Mu'ādh to Yemen. He said to them: **"Both of you, make things easy, not hard; give good news and do not cause aversion; obey each other and do not be in disagreement."**

[Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent two of his most distinguished companions, Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī and Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, to Yemen to call on its people to believe in Islam and to educate them in their faith. As they were about to leave, the Prophet gave them this short but greatly valuable advice.

The first thing the Prophet said to them was to **"make things easy, not difficult."** He thus counselled them to deal kindly with people and inform them about their faith without being too strict or too hard. They should inform people that the divine religion is easy to follow. It is not hard and causes no one any hardship.

The Prophet also told Abu Mūsā and Mu'ādh: **"Give good news and do not cause aversion."** This means that their discourse with people should raise for them the prospect of enjoying God's favours so that they would be keen to earn His pleasure. Therefore, they must not speak to people in a way that makes them averse to believe or do good.

The Prophet's third advice is important for every two companions or friends. He said to them: **"Obey each other and do not be in disagreement."** He thus tells them that each of them should be keen to obey the other when he realizes that his friend is keen to have or do something in a particular way. Doing this will strengthen their friendship and love for one another.

We thus learn that a person who maintains an easy relationship with his friends and tries not to be in dispute with them follows the Prophet's sunnah. But, on the other hand, the one who often argues and starts conflicts, his actions drive him away from the sunnah.

27

Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Whoever carries arms against us does not belong to us."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

Security is a great blessing God bestows on people, and it is essential for human life to prosper. God clearly states that it is a favour God has granted to people, as He says: "Let them worship the Lord of this House, who provided them with food against hunger, and with security against fear." (106:3-4)

'Since it is crucial to maintain security in society, the Prophet warns against carrying arms to frighten people or threaten them with death. This includes rebellion and creating division in society.

‘In this hadith, the Prophet clarifies that a person who carries arms against the Muslim community does not belong to it. This hadith is clear evidence that whoever carries weapons for such a purpose does not follow the Prophet. Therefore, his sin is grave indeed.

28

‘Abdullāh ibn Mughaffal reports: **“God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) prohibited flinging pebbles and said: ‘Neither is game hunted, nor an enemy hurt [from doing so]. Yet it may break a tooth or injure an eye.’”** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to teach people what benefits them and warn them against what causes harm, whether in relation to their faith or their present life. Hence, God praises the Prophet in this verse: “Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers” (9:128). God makes clear that sending the Prophet with His message is a favour He had bestowed on the believers, as He says: “Indeed, God bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent them a messenger from among themselves, to recite to them His revelations, and to purify them, and teach them the Book and wisdom, whereas before that they were surely in plain error” (3:164).

‘In this hadith, the Prophet prohibits a practice some people used to do in pre-Islamic and early Islamic days: flinging pebbles. The Prophet informs us of the reason for this prohibition, stating that it brings no benefit. It does not help in hunting game. Nor does it hurt the enemy. On the contrary, it may cause harm, breaking someone’s tooth or injuring someone’s eye.

This prohibition applies to all people, young and old. However, it is vital to remind young people of the Prophet’s warning because they may often resort to flinging pebbles as a pastime. Hence, they need to be advised and warned against doing this.

29

Anas ibn Mālik said: **"I served the Prophet for ten years, and he never said 'ugh' to me."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated from Makkah and arrived in Madinah, Anas ibn Mālik's mother came to see him, bringing her ten-year-old son with her. She said: "Messenger of God, this is my son, Anas. I have brought him here so that he would serve you." So the Prophet (peace be upon him) welcomed him.

Ever since that day, Anas remained the Prophet's servant, doing numerous errands and duties, parting with him only briefly.

In this hadith Anas tells us about the Prophet's manners, stating that he spent ten years serving the Prophet. He never heard the Prophet saying a word of criticism or blame to him during his long time with him. He did not even so much as say a mild word of displeasure, such as "ugh".

This hadith demonstrates the Prophet's exemplary manners and how he behaved with his companions, young and old, servants or dignitaries.

It also teaches us a very important lesson: we should be kind to our subordinates, whether they are our employees or servants. They are human like us, and we must respect them and ensure that they get their rights in full.

30

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"If any of you leaves his place, then comes back, he is more entitled to it."**

[Related by Muslim].

Explanation

Our faith is perfect. It explains to us whatever benefits us in this present life and in the life to come, whether it is minor or significant. The present hadith mentions a particular aspect of manners when people sit together. The Prophet says that a person sitting with a group of people may rise and attend to something then come back. He is entitled to keep his place, no one else should take it, and it is his right to have it back.

This applies to all places, such as common areas, mosques, study circles, classrooms, etc. If a person leaves his place and comes back after a short while, he is entitled to where he was sitting before he left. If a long time elapses before he comes back, he is not entitled to it. For example, a man may have a place attending a circle in the mosque after Ẓuhr prayer. He leaves and returns after 'Aṣr or Maghrib prayer or the following day. In this case, he is not entitled to return to the place he left earlier.

We see that many disputes, particularly among young people, arise about people's places. This is frequently the case at home and school.

When we observe Islamic manners in our groups, we increase our friendly relations and have fewer disagreements.

31

Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"The duties owed by a Muslim to a Muslim are six: greet him when you meet him; if he invites you, accept; if he seeks your advice, give him sincere counsel; if he sneezes and praises God, bless him; if he falls ill, visit him; and when he dies, follow his funeral."**

[Related by Muslim].

Explanation

A Muslim owes many duties to other Muslims, and among the more important of these duties are the six mentioned in this hadith. They are as follows:

1. **Greeting.** When you meet your brother, greet him. If he starts by greeting you, return his greeting.
2. **Accepting invitation.** If your Muslim brother invites you, you should accept, particularly if he invites you to a wedding dinner. Acceptance, in this case, is even more important.
3. **Giving good counsel.** If your Muslim brother seeks your advice or asks you about something, you should give him sincere advice, speaking honestly and truthfully.

4. **Blessing the one who sneezes.** If your Muslim brother sneezes and says *alḥamd lillāh*, i.e. “All praise is due to God,” then bless him, saying: “May God bestow mercy on you.” He should answer by saying: “May God guide you and rectify your affairs.”

5. **Visiting the sick.** Should your Muslim brother fall ill, you should visit him. He will be most pleased with your visit, and God will give you a good reward for it.

6. **Following funeral.** The claims a Muslim has on other Muslims continue even after his death. Therefore, if your Muslim brother dies, you should attend his funeral, participate in the funeral prayer offered for him, then follow the funeral to the graveyard. This ensures much goodness because the deceased benefits from the supplication of the people attending his funeral and receiving God’s reward.

32

Abd Sa'īd al-Khudrī reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"Give the road its due right." They asked: "What is its right?" He said: "To lower one's gaze, refrain from what causes harm to anyone, return a greeting, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

During the Prophet's lifetime, people used to sit by the roadside, socializing and discussing things. The Prophet told them that they should not sit by roadsides. They said that they needed to do that as a means of socialization. The Prophet told them that they should give the road its dues in this case. In response to their enquiry about the dues of the road, the Prophet mentioned these four duties:

1. Lower your gaze. Whoever is sitting by the roadside should lower one's gaze. If he sees a house with an open door, he should not stare at it, and if a woman passes by, he should not stare at her. This is to comply with God's order: "Tell believing men to lower their gaze and to be mindful of their chastity. This is most conducive to their purity. God is certainly aware of all that they do" (24:30).

2. Cause no harm. People sitting by the roadside must not disturb other road users by causing the road to be narrow. In addition, they must not throw litter on the road.

3. Returning greeting. If a passer-by offers a greeting to those sitting by the roadside, they have to return his greeting. To offer a greeting is recommended, but returning a greeting is an obligation. God says: "When a greeting is offered you, answer it with an even better greeting, or [at least] with its like. God keeps count of all things" (4:86).

4. Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. God praises the believers for maintaining this quality. He says: "The believers, men and women, are friends to one another: They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; they attend to their prayers, and pay their zakat, and obey God and His Messenger. It is on these that God will have mercy. Surely, God is Almighty, Wise" (9:71).

33

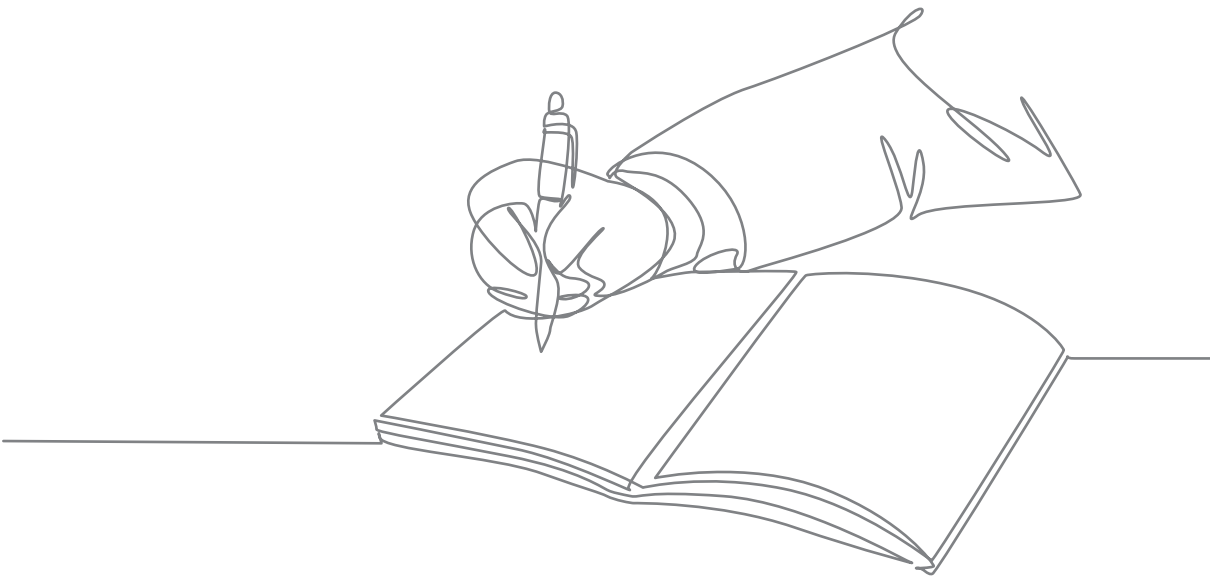
‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“It is not right for a Muslim person who has something he wishes to give as a bequest to stay two nights without having his will already written.”** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

This hadith states the necessity for a person to write a will if he has something to be done after his death. If a person owes someone something, or owes zakat which has not been paid, or has been entrusted with something, or if something is deposited with him and needs to be returned, then stating this in a will is obligatory. If he owes no such duty, making a will is recommended but not obligatory. He may bequeath by choice up to one-third of his estate, donating for good causes or to relatives who are not his heirs or poor people.

A will should be made concerning even small matters, such as the repayment of a small debt, the price of a bought article that was not paid, or similar ordinary matters.

It should also be noted that there is no specific formula for a will. All that is required is to write what one wants to be done clearly. This may be written on paper, sent by email, spoken verbally, or on the telephone. Any such method is good and sufficient.



34

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar reports that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **“God, Mighty and Exalted, forbids you to swear by your parents. Whoever says an oath must either swear by God or remain silent.”** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

At the beginning of Islam, the Prophet’s companions might say an oath by someone other than God, as they used to do that in pre-Islamic days. They might swear by their parents, or upon their honour, etc. The Prophet prohibited them from making such oaths. ‘Umar was one of the Prophet’s companions who heard this prohibition, and he immediately acted on it. He never subsequently swore by anyone other than God.

When ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated this hadith, he mentioned that ‘Umar said: “By God, I never swore by anyone or anything ever since I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibiting it.” Such is a Muslim’s duty: to abide by God’s orders with resolve, showing no hesitation or slackening or weakness.

There are various forms of swearing by other than God in our present time. For example, a person may say: “By your life,” or “By the Prophet,” or “By the Ka’bah.” All such oaths are forbidden. Indeed they are a form of associating partners with God. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar heard a man say: “No, by the Ka’bah.” He said to him: “Do not swear by anything other than God. I heard God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) say: **‘Whoever swears by other than God commits an act of disbelief or associating partners with God.’”** [Related by Ahmad, Abu Dāwūd, and al-Tirmidhī].

35

Abu Hurayrah reports: **"God's Messenger (peace be upon him) never spoke ill of any food. When he liked something, he ate of it, and if he disliked it, he just left it."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet was exemplary in his refined manners. One aspect of his exemplary manners is that he liked good words and disliked words that might offend. The present hadith tells us of one of his excellent dealings. If some food was presented to him, he would never speak ill of it. He would not say it is cold, unappetizing, not well cooked, etc. He would not criticise it in any way. He would eat from it if he liked it, but if he disliked it, he would simply leave it.

We should follow the Prophet's example. We should never criticise any food. Rather, we should praise God and thank Him for His bounty. We should only say what is good and what is beneficial.

36

Al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib said: **"God's Messenger (peace be upon him) had the best-looking face and was the best of people in features. He was neither very tall nor short."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best of people in his manners and values. God, Blessed and Exalted, says of him: "Most certainly, yours is a sublime character" (68:4). Yet, in addition to his refined manners, the Prophet was very handsome. His companion, al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib describes him as having the best looking face and the best features.

The Prophet was of medium height. He was neither very tall nor short. In another hadith, al-Barā' said: **"God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was of middle height, with a wide span between his shoulders. He had thick hair reaching down to the end of his ears. I saw him wearing two red garments. I never saw anyone who looked better than him."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Both al-Bukhari and Muslim relate a hadith narrated by Anas in which he said: **"God's Messenger was very fair in complexion."** The Arabic word used here suggests that his whiteness had a slight reddish tinge. Abu Hurayrah said: **"God's Messenger was so white in complexion, as though he was made of silver."** [Related by al-Tirmidhī].

Jābir ibn Samurah said: **"I saw God's Messenger (peace be upon him) on a night of a clear moon. I looked at him and the moon. To me, he was far better looking than the moon."** [Related by al-Tirmidhī].

May God shower peace and blessings on His last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad.

37

‘Amr ibn al-’Āṣ said: **“I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Which person do you love the most? He said: “Ā’ishah.’ I said: What about men? He said: ‘Her father.’ I said: Then who? He said: “Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.’”** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

‘Amr ibn al-’Āṣ was a distinguished and famous companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this hadith, ‘Amr tells us that he asked the Prophet which person he loved best. The Prophet’s answer was that his wife, ‘Ā’ishah, was the dearest person to him. When ‘Amr repeated the question, specifying men only, the Prophet’s told him that ‘Ā’ishah’s father, Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, was the one he loved most. ‘Amr questioned the Prophet further, asking him who came next in his love. The Prophet named his second most famous companion, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. The fact that the Prophet much loved these gives these three noble companions, ‘Ā’ishah, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, a special grade of distinction.

What should be known to every Muslim is that all Sunni Muslims consider that the four rightly-guided caliphs were the best of the Prophet's companions and that their respective ranks are the same as that of their succession, which means that they have the following order of merit: Abu Bakr, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. May God be pleased with them all.

These were the best of the Muslim community in all its generations. Therefore, we must love them and all other companions of the Prophet by respecting them and praying that they attain God's pleasure.

38

Anas ibn Mālik reports that the supplication the Prophet said most often was: **"Our Lord, grant us what is good in this world and what is good in the life to come and protect us from the torment of the Fire."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

Supplication is one of the best good deeds because it implies sincere glorification of God and firm belief in His Oneness. As such, the Prophet used to supplicate frequently. His supplications are well documented in the Hadith collections, such as the six most authentic ones: the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim, and the four Sunan anthologies of al-Tirmidhī, Abu Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Mājah.

Although the Prophet said numerous supplications, he used to say this supplication most often: **"Our Lord, grant us what is good in this world and what is good in the life to come and protect us from the torment of the Fire."** This is indeed a great supplication, and it is mentioned in the Qur'an. It combines the best in this life and the life to come. The late Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa'dī commented on this supplication and said:

The goodness sought in this life includes every good thing that may happen to a person, such as a plentiful and lawful income, a goodly spouse, delightful children, happiness, useful knowledge, good deeds that earn God's reward, etc.

The goodness in the life to come includes safety from punishment in the grave and in Hell, assurance of having God's pleasure, enjoying everlasting happiness, and being close to God, the Ever-Merciful.

As such, this supplication is most comprehensive and should be repeated often. Hence, the Prophet used to say it very frequently, and he encouraged us to do the same.(1)

(1) A. al-Sa□dī, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān*, Beirut, 2011, p. 69.

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Abu Hurayrah reports that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **"When a human being dies, his action ceases except in one of three ways: a continuous act of charity, a useful contribution to knowledge, or a dutiful child who prays for him."** [Related by al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Explanation

God commands His servants who believe in Him to do good deeds to ensure that they earn His mercy and are safe from His punishment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith that when a human being dies, his action comes to an end except in three ways, which earn them God's reward after death.

The first of these three actions is to do something that constitutes a continuous act of charity during one's life. A clear example is to dig a well in an area with a scarce water supply, and this well continues to provide water for passers-by for a long time. Whenever a person draws some water from this well, the person who dug it will receive God's reward for that. Similar acts of continuous charity include building a mosque, a hospital, or a school and donating useful books and copies of the Qur'an.

The second action is to make a useful contribution to knowledge. For example, suppose a person teaches some people, gives them sound advice, writes a book, or publishes and distributes beneficial knowledge. In that case, he earns a reward for his action during his lifetime and after his death.

The third way of earning reward after death is through good children. If parents provide their children with a good upbringing and education, all the children's good deeds will reward their parents. Moreover, a dutiful child will pray to God to bestow mercy on its parents. Thus, the parents receive a reward because of their child's prayer.

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Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh said: I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say: **“Everyone is resurrected as he felt at the point of his death.”** [Related by Muslim].

Explanation

This hadith speaks of a goodly end. This is one of the most important matters that upright and devout people endeavour to ensure for themselves. This has been the case ever since the generation of the Prophet’s companions. A virtuous end signifies that one departs this life full of faith and doing good deeds.

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that everyone is resurrected on the Day of Judgement in the same condition he departed this present life. Thus, if a person dies while saying the recommended supplication during the hajj or the ‘umrah, he will be resurrected saying the same supplication. Likewise, if one glorifies God at the point of one’s death, he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement, saying the same glorification. By contrast, the one who dies while engaged in a sinful action will be resurrected doing the same sinful action. May God protect us all from such an end.

Therefore, we should endeavour to refrain from sin and be keen to fill our time with virtuous deeds so that we come to a goodly end. Thus we ensure that we are resurrected on the Day of Judgement, enjoying God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins.

Index

1. ‘Islam is built on five: the declaration that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God’s Messenger, regular attendance to prayer, payment of zakat, the pilgrimage and fasting during Ramadan’.

2. ‘God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) was asked about grave sins. He said: “Associating partners with God, undutifulness to parents, murder and perjury”’.

3. ‘A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe’.

4. ‘The mark of a hypocrite consists of three characteristics: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; and when he is placed in trust, he betrays’.

5. ‘What separates a person from disbelief and associating partners with God is the negligence of prayer’.

6. ‘A strong believer is better and dearer to God than a weak believer, but there is goodness in both’.

7. ‘Whoever performs the ablution for prayer and he performs it well, then walks to [join] the obligatory prayer and he offers it with the congregation shall be forgiven his sins by God’.

8. ‘Whoever intentionally attributes to me a statement I did not say shall take his seat in the Fire’.

9. ‘A person with an atom weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Heaven’.

10. ‘The best of you are those who learn the Qur’an and teach it’.

11. ‘Two phrases are easy to pronounce, heavy in [God’s] scales, and loved by the Lord of Grace: ‘Limitless is God in His glory and to Him all praise is due; and Limitless in His glory is God the Supreme’.

12. ‘My friend (peace be upon him) urged me to maintain three things: fasting three days in every month, praying two *rak'ahs* in the mid-morning and praying Witr before I go to bed’.

13. ‘The closest a servant of God draws to his Lord is when he is in prostration. Say more supplication then’.

14. ‘Cursing a believer is like killing him’.

15. ‘God, Blessed and Exalted be He, says: Son of Adam, spend and I will give you more’.

16. ‘Whatever a believer suffers of a chronic illness, weakness, malady, grief, worry, and even a thorn that pricks him, will wipe away some of his sins’.

17. ‘You shall not be admitted into Heaven unless you [truly] believe; and you will not believe unless you love one another. Shall I point out to you something which, if you do it, will generate love between you? Spread the greeting of peace widely among you’.

18. ‘Let no man look at the private parts [i.e. the *'awrah*] of another man; nor a woman at the private parts of another woman’.

19. ‘We have returned it to you only because we are in consecration’.

20. ‘A person who tells tales of calumny will not enter Heaven’.

21. ‘If any Muslim plants a tree or some other plant and any bird, human or animal eats of it, it will be credited to him as charity’.

22. ‘The one with a rightful claim is eloquent’.

23. ‘Whoever is pleased that God saves him from the distress of the Day of Judgement, should give respite to the one in straitened circumstances, or reduce his debt’.

24. ‘Whoever cheats us does not belong to us’.

25. ‘Whoever wrests by an oath something that rightfully belongs to a Muslim person, God will decree the Fire for him and forbid him heaven’. A man asked: ‘Even if it is little, Messenger of God?’ The Prophet said: ‘Even if it is a stick of a wood tree’.

26. ‘Both of you, make things easy, not hard; give good news and do not cause aversion; obey each other and do not be in disagreement’.

27. ‘Whoever carries arms against us does not belong to us’.

28. God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) prohibited flinging pebbles and said: ‘Neither is game taken thereby, nor is the enemy hurt. Yet it may break a tooth or put out an eye’.

29. ‘I served the Prophet for ten years, and he never said, “Ugh”, to me’.

30. ‘If any of you leaves his place, then comes back, he is more entitled to it’.

31. ‘The duties owed by a Muslim to a Muslim are six: greet him when you meet him; if he invites you, accept; if he seeks your advice, give him sincere counsel; if he sneezes and praises God, bless him; if he falls ill, visit him; and when he dies, follow his funeral’.

32. ‘Give the road its due right’. They asked: ‘What is its right?’ He said: ‘To lower one’s gaze, refrain from what causes harm to anyone, return greeting, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong’.

33. ‘It is not right for a Muslim person who has something he wishes to give as a bequest to stay two nights without having his will already written’.

34. ‘God, Mighty and Exalted, forbids you to swear by your parents. Whoever says an oath must either swear by God or remain silent’.

35. ‘God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) never spoke ill of any food. When he liked something, he ate of it, and if he disliked it, he just left it’.

36. ‘God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) had the best looking face and was the best of people in features. He was neither very tall, nor short’.

37. ‘I asked the Prophet (peace be upon him): Which person do you love best? He said: “'Ā’ishah”. I said: What about men? He said: “Her father”. I said: Then who? He said: “'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb’.

38. The supplication the Prophet said most often was: ‘Our Lord, grant us what is good in this world and what is good in the life to come and protect us from the torment of the Fire’.

39. ‘When a human being dies, his action ceases except in one of three ways: a continuous act of charity, a useful contribution to knowledge, or a dutiful child who prays for him’.

40. ‘Everyone is resurrected as he felt at the point of his death’.

English

- This book is suitable for the young, but it is also good for adults. It only includes verses of the Qur'an, statements by the Prophet (peace be upon him), or advice based on what eminent scholars have written.
- I have chosen short hadiths so that they can be easily memorized. They address a variety of subjects so that they will give great benefit.
- I provide an index listing the texts of the hadiths, or their beginnings, to help with memorization and revision.
- My primary purpose in compiling this selection is to make it easy for young Muslims to memorize. Therefore, I suggest that programs and competitions should be organized in homes, schools and other places for such memorization.
- I urge parents and teachers to first read this book with their sons and daughters or with their students to learn the correct pronunciation of each hadith. They should also teach them the Islamic manners highlighted by the hadiths.
- I highlight numerous beneficial points and directives in my explanation of the hadiths. However, the messages of these hadiths go far beyond what I have mentioned. Therefore, I hope that young readers will endeavour to discover these and record them, either through individual or joint efforts, so that they will learn more and impart knowledge to others.

Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Muhanna

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